

**Stow Conservation Commission
Minutes
January 4, 2022**

A meeting of the Stow Conservation Commission was held on January 4, 2022 at 7:30 in the evening remotely VIA Zoom Videoconferencing in accordance with the Governors' Executive Order on Remote Meeting participation.

There were present: Matt Styckiewicz, Vice Chair
Jeff Saunders
Ingeborg Hegemann Clark
Liza Mattison
Holly Clack
Doug Morse

Absent: Serena Furman, Chair

Also Present: Kathy Sferra, Conservation Coordinator
Jacquie Goring, Conservation Assistant
Tom Porcher, Associate Member

Matt Styckiewicz called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Appointment – Stow Fire Department – Chief John Paul Benoit/ Lieutenant Barry Evers – Fire Chief John Paul Benoit and Lieutenant Barry Evers were present to discuss proposed fire cisterns on Stow Conservation Land and within the Commission's jurisdiction. Chief Benoit informed the Commission that the Town has received State funding to increase the number of water sources for fire protection. Lieutenant Evers reviewed a presentation on the proposed cistern locations. Lieutenant Evers noted that Stow does not have municipal water and there are key locations in Town that are in critical need of fire protection. Lieutenant Evers showed photo examples of cisterns being installed. The proposed cisterns will be 10'x 60' feet and hold 30,000 gallons of water which is the required amount to lower the insurance rating for the Town. Once installed, the cisterns require little maintenance and can be finished to match the existing surface including grass, plantings, or asphalt. Lieutenant Evers reviewed photos of the proposed cistern locations including two at Conant Drive, the parking lot at Marble Hill Conservation Area, behind Town Building, at the driveway to the fire station, and at the old fire station at 16 Crescent Street.

Sferra noted that some cisterns may require wetland filings including the Marble Hill Parking lot and fire station locations. Also, the Commission would need to review plans for cisterns on town conservation land. Sferra noted that improvements to the Marble Hill parking lot could be made as part of the project. Conservation staff will meet with Fire Department staff in the field to review the locations. Chief Benoit confirmed that the areas would be restored in kind after the cisterns are installed and there will be photo documentation before and after installation. Chief Benoit added that

cisterns require significantly less maintenance than water holes, don't require dredging, and are not susceptible to drought.

Chief Benoit added that \$300,000 of the \$600,000 needed to complete the twelve cisterns was allocated to the Town so the Fire Department has prioritized five to six cisterns. The prioritized locations are in residential areas like Harvard Acres and near Town structures. Chief Benoit confirmed that excavation would not start until the tanks arrived because they do not want to disturb the ground or have open excavations for a long period of time. The Commission thanked them and had no additional feedback.

Notice of Intent – Steve Dahill, Radant Technologies, Inc – 255 Hudson Road – Matt Styckiewicz read the hearing notice. Nathaniel Cataldo, Stamski & McNary, and applicant Steven Dahill were present. Cataldo noted that the work area is limited to an area behind the existing building. The proposed work includes replacement of a water holding tank, grading an existing berm, and tree removal. A portion of the work is located within the 100' inner riparian zone to an unnamed perennial stream and all of the work is located within the 200' River Front Area (RFA). No work is proposed within flood plain. The water holding tank is used for fire protection. The existing water bladder was damaged by a tree. The damaged bladder will be removed and the berm around the bladder will be graded. Trees will be removed on the berm prior to grading. The proposed tank will be on a smaller footprint which will reduce the amount of impervious area. The soil removed from the berm will be trucked offsite.

Jeff Saunders and Holly Clack visited the site. Saunders reviewed photos from the site visit and described an area of trees that were removed to access the fallen tree that damaged the water bladder and fence. A temporary water tank system is currently being used at great expense including heaters to keep the water from freezing. Saunders noted that the additional tree removal that is proposed may not be needed but the applicant would like to include it in the permit in the event it is necessary to complete the work. Dahill noted that they plan to keep as many trees as possible. Saunders added that no tree removal or work will occur within 35' no disturb buffer. The fence around the existing water bladder will be removed and not replaced. Dahill confirmed that excess soil from grading may need to be stockpiled outside the RFA. Dahill added that there is one tree they would like to save but plan to remove other small trees that are not in good health. Dahill confirmed that the area where the temporary system is currently located is typically mowed during the summer and could be seeded once the system is removed.

The Commission discussed allowing the area of tree cutting to reestablish, replanting shrubs or using a seed mix, and demarcating the area with boulders or fence so it is left to naturalize. Sferra confirmed that DEP issued a file number and did not have any comments. The Commission discussed including a condition in the decision requiring stockpiling to occur outside the 200' RFA and erosion controls around the stockpile. *Jeff Saunders moved to close the hearing. Liza Mattison seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (6-0) on a roll call vote.*

Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation – MCO & Associates, Inc. – Off Randall Road – Matt Styckiewicz read the hearing notice. Jeff Saunders stepped in as chair as Styckiewicz was experiencing

microphone problems. Saunders reviewed the Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) hearing process and clarified that the Commission is not reviewing development plans at this point.

Nathanial Cataldo, Stamski & McNary; wetland scientist Dave Crossman, B&C Associates; and Mark O'Hagan, MCO & Associates; were present. Cataldo shared the plans and reviewed the location of the property which currently contains a golf course. Various wetland resource areas are on the property including a perennial stream and associated RFA, wetlands, 100' buffer, and 35' no disturb buffer. Cataldo noted there was a follow-up site visit with the Commission to review the wetland flagging and changes have been requested which will require revised plans.

Ingeborg Hegemann Clark noted that an additional wetland needs to be flagged on the east side of the property and a small area on sheet four should be flagged. Hegemann Clark noted that culverts and Crossman's data sheet locations should also be included on the plan. Hegemann Clark added that interior resource areas (streams, bank) were not flagged and will be needed if activity is proposed in those areas. Crossman will review the revised plans before submittal to the Commission. Sferra clarified the areas which need additional flagging including a wetland between the Stow Acres property and the residential properties to the east and a small wetland near wetland flag 152.

Alison Doucette, 30 Cross Street, requested clarification on the location of the entrance of the development and if a road can go through a wetland. Cataldo reviewed the plan and O'Hagan confirmed the entrance is not proposed to run through the wetland but adjacent to them, likely in the buffer zone.

Helen and Ron Ham, 21 Cross Street, also asked about the road location. O'Hagan clarified that the ANRAD is the first step of the planning process. The Concept design plan will be added to a plan with a topographic survey and the approved wetland delineation to determine if work is proposed within the Commission's jurisdiction. O'Hagan added that the project will also require permits from the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Conservation Commission and both will be a public process.

Claudia Peters, 147 Boon Road, asked for clarification on the location of the stream that crosses Randall Road. The Commission explained that the stream is off the plans but described the location of 200' buffer to the stream which is included on the plans. Peters asked if the pines on Randall Road could be kept. O'Hagan stated that he is not sure if they will be because the design plans have not been completed but he would like to keep them. The Commission added that removal of the trees within the Commission's jurisdiction would be subject to the permitting process.

Christian Jackson, 285 Gleasondale Road, asked if the wetland areas along the eastern property line will be changing. The Commission clarified that Crossman completed a wetland delineation which the Commission is reviewing. The process legally defines the wetland line for three years. Jackson asked if a stand of trees could be planted in the wetland area. Sferra confirmed that homeowners can plant trees without a permit but if the applicant wants to plant trees for screening it could be part of the proposed plans.

Helen Ham asked about the impacts of development on wells and the aquifer. The Commission noted that they presume all the delineated wetlands are currently in good condition and ensure they are not damaged. O'Hagan added that there will be a year-long permitting process with DEP regarding the water supply wells including the location, testing, and drilling. A similar process will be done for the wastewater treatment facility. O'Hagan also noted that DEP does not provide special treatment because the project includes an affordable housing component. O'Hagan added that once the survey work is done, they can begin siting the wastewater treatment facility and well which is planned to be located near Wheeler Pond away from abutting residences. O'Hagan stated that the process will be transparent, and he is happy to address specific questions and can meet with abutters individually about buffers. O'Hagan clarified that the well siting will be done through DEP.

Doug Morse left the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Doucette asked about public input in the DEP permitting process. O'Hagan stated that he could put together a timeframe of submittals and one abutter could be the point person to get copies of the submittals to share with others. Doucette offered to be the point person.

John Smits, 279 Gleasondale Road, asked when O'Hagan estimates they will break ground. O'Hagan stated that the permitting process on average takes eighteen to 24 months and pending market conditions the project will be a four-year build cycle.

O'Hagan requested a continuance to January 18, 2022 and confirmed he would request another continuance if he could not provide revised plans reviewed by Crossman in time for the 18th. The Commission will review Crossman's revised delineation in the field. Sferra clarified that abutters will not receive another notice and the agenda will be posted on the website. *Ingeborg Hegemann Clark moved to continue the hearing to January 18, 2022 at or after 7:30 PM. Matt Styckiewicz seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.*

Styckiewicz continued as chair.

Minutes

Holly Clack moved to approve the minutes of December 21, 2021 as written. Liza Mattison seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Approve Payment of Invoice for Stow Acres Title Work – Sferra requested the Commission approve payment of an invoice for the title work for Stow Acres. Sferra discussed the various sources of funds with the Town Administrator and they are recommending using the Community Preservation Funds appropriated in 2016 for small land acquisition projects and due diligence. Of the \$50,000 appropriated to the fund, approximately \$43,000 remains. The Commission will need to approve the use of the fund prior to Sferra seeking approval from the Community Preservation Committee. *Liza Mattison moved to approve paying the invoice from the 2016 CPA funds. Holly Clack seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.*

Discussion/Vote – Fiscal Year 2023 Budget – Sferra reviewed the budget process including salary, expenses, conservation fund request, and capital budget. Sferra noted the changes to the operating budget including the trail steward position. Sferra would like to hire two people for a fewer number of weeks and hours and include the position into the operating budget. Sferra also noted that the salary adjustments are a result of the salary study. A special article for \$1,600 will be included on the warrant for water chestnut removal for OARS, which is less than what has been requested in previous years. Sferra also included an additional departmental goal for FY2023 to work on a plan for the Land Steward Position. *Ingeborg Hegemann Clark moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 budget. Liza Mattison seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.*

Staff and Commission Member Updates

- A tax taking of the DiPietro Property has been completed by the Town of Bolton. The Town of Bolton has not made a final decision on what will be done with the property.
- Liza Mattison and Jacquie Goring will take the lead with the NOI filed for 66 Pine Point.
- Sferra will be requesting quotes for the Kalousdian Road survey.
- An anonymous resident made a \$5,000 donation to the Conservation Fund for land acquisition.
- Tom Porcher noted that the Stow Conservation Trust (SCT) is having survey work done as it appears that two properties may have encroaching septic systems at Red Acre Woodlands. SCT is also considering applying for grant funding for boardwalks at the Shepherd and Kunelius properties.

Decision – 255 Hudson Road – The Commission reviewed a draft decision and requested that a condition be added requiring stockpiles to be outside the 200' buffer and require erosion controls. The Commission discussed the area of tree cutting and agreed the area should be seeded with a conservation seed mix and allowed to naturalize. The Commission requested that a line of boulders or fencing be installed to keep the area from being used in the future. *Jeff Saunders moved to approve the Order as amended. Holly Clack seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.*

At 9:35 PM, Ingeborg Hegemann Clark moved to adjourn, Holly Clack seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacquelyn Goring, Conservation Assistant

Materials Used at Meeting

Meeting Packet

255 Hudson Road revised plans and photos

255 Hudson Road draft decision